

[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

24 October 2018

To the Bahá'ís of Iran

The order of the world has been disrupted, and severe and numerous convulsions have shaken its foundation. Conditions worsen daily, confusion and fear have gripped mankind, and the pain and difficulties experienced by the generality of peoples have greatly increased. The destructive forces of materialism dominate both the East and the West and have brought about a quagmire of injustice and prejudice that has sullied and rendered powerless the wings of society, whilst the human spirit, which is created to ascend towards the divine realm, has been enslaved in the talons of greed and wilfulness and become deprived of the bounty of the light of true religion. The problems of the world—which are clearly evident in the arenas of politics, economics, social conditions, and the environment—confront humanity's future with inescapable dangers and yet its leaders remain unaware of their fundamental causes, are unable to remedy them, and are fearful of their consequences. The situation of the world calls to mind the following statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Chaos and confusion are daily increasing in the world. They will attain such intensity as to render the frame of mankind unable to bear them. Then will men be awakened". The believers in Iran, who since the dawning of the Morn of Guidance in that land, have been robed in the vesture of Faith, are conscious of the admonitions and explicit warnings of the Ancient Beauty, have acquired the vision inspired by His Teachings, and are well aware of both the profound reasons for these crises and His guidance about them.

One of the most pressing challenges afflicting multitudes of people across the globe is the disturbed economic situation. The lack of a necessary framework to ensure equity and justice in the distribution of wealth has led to an increase in unemployment and poverty to the extent that even providing life's basic essentials has become extremely difficult for many strata of society. The consequences of the vast divide between the rich and the poor, whether within or among the nations, are indescribable. Amidst all this, you—the long-standing and faithful followers of the Blessed Beauty—not only suffer the impact and hardship of the present condition of the world, as all others suffer, but have been subject over many years to unrelenting persecution and numerous cruelties. These persecutions and cruelties have been and are still being carried out in a systematic and planned way to weaken the Bahá'í community in Iran and to deplete its economic strength.

In our message dated 11 June 2009 addressed to the Bahá'ís in Iran, about a year after the arrest and imprisonment of the members of the former Yárán, we reminded the friends that taking care of individuals and families who, despite their noble efforts, nevertheless stand in need of financial assistance, is among the sacred and indispensable duties of the people of Bahá, and we requested them to assist and collaborate with one another on this path. The actions that in the ensuing years the Bahá'í community of Iran has undertaken in response to this call are truly astonishing. Despite the absence of Bahá'í institutions and notwithstanding

the countless injustices and limited resources, individuals and the community were able to arise with tenacity, sacrifice, abiding love, and matchless creativity to respond to critical needs and to assist one another. Through adherence to the command of consultation, which paves the way for humanity and resolves countless problems, and through reflection upon its diverse applications, you—the followers of the Threshold of the Almighty—have striven to strengthen the culture of mutual support and have arisen, to the extent possible, to address the challenges of obtaining employment, taking care of the elderly, and attending to the poor, and for the youth are facilitating apprenticeship, providing jobs, assisting those who wish to marry, and, of course, continuing with efforts to offer them higher education. What has caused even greater joy and won our still greater admiration for you is that, even under these trying conditions, you have not limited yourselves to the affairs of your own community but in numerous instances and through various means, you have, with great endeavour, unsullied hearts, and pure intent, also striven to the extent possible to assist your neighbours and other fellow citizens who are in need. By your actions, you have become the embodiments of the exhortation of Bahá'u'lláh in the Tablet of Wisdom where He admonishes His followers not to let their endeavours be spent in promoting their personal interests. It is undoubtedly difficult, and at times beyond the limits of endurance, to bear the trials and tribulations heaped upon you. Yet, among the shining achievements of the Bahá'í community in Iran in these years are the deepening solidarity of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, their accompanying one another, the emergence of new dimensions of social collaboration, and the efflorescence of personal initiative. We are confident that future generations will look back with wonder and admiration upon your efforts and experiences during these times.

Beloved friends: The sacred mission that the Abhá Beauty has laid upon the shoulders of the members of your sorely tried community is certainly not limited to solidarity within your community or to economic assistance and collaboration. At this time, when despair and fear have gripped humanity from every direction and led to hopelessness, especially among the young generations, praised be God that you are the embodiments of encouragement and assurance for the peoples of the world and are like unto radiant lamps in the circles of your compatriots and acquaintances; you are as signs of love and amity and in every assemblage, as symbols of forbearance and goodly intent. Inspired by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, you participate in the constructive discourses of society and assist your fellow citizens to develop a vision that transcends the current difficulties, so that they can dedicate themselves to developing the capacities and talents necessary for the material and spiritual advancement of their communities and go forward with confidence and hope in building a vibrant and progressive society.

Of course, the discharge of such a mission is not possible save through the power of the love of God and a firm belief in the fulfilment of Divine Purpose regarding the brilliant future of Iran and its people. A feeble candle is extinguished by a mere breeze, while the flame of love and faith that is ablaze in the hearts of His loved ones grows in intensity, light, and heat through the storms of persecution. Praised be God that you have been confirmed in service to His Sacred Threshold and are following in the footsteps of your heroic forbears. Consider, however, that many of those souls in the early years of the Cause did not live to see with their outer eyes the effects and results of their own sacrifices, while today, you witness with your very eyes the collective transformation taking place in your country and the removal of historic misunderstandings and suspicion about the Cause of God among many of your compatriots.

Therefore, O loved ones of God, in these days of tests and trials, commit to the tablet of the heart this statement of the beloved Master: “Whosoever entereth the Kingdom of God is under the protection of Bahá'u'lláh. The changes and chances of the material world, whether good or bad, are like the waves of the sea, which pass away and are no more. They are not worthy of attention.... The denizens of the Kingdom derive their joy from the bounties of God and set their hopes on His infinite grace. They exult in the outpourings of divine bounty and are gladdened by the favours of the Lord of Hosts. In the fire of tribulations they remain fresh and verdant, and in the tempest of trials and afflictions tranquil and at peace, for they rest their backs against a mighty mountain and take refuge in a ship wrought of steel.”

On every occasion when we present ourselves at the Sacred Threshold, we pray for those distinguished champions of the arenas of fidelity and steadfastness and ardently beseech God that His confirmations and assistance may be extended to every one of you, so that you may succeed in every aspect of your lives and in the fulfilment of your spiritual goals.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]